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Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, dated 24 March 2000. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments, programmes and agencies. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

* E/AC.51/2000/1.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking a decision on an in-depth evaluation.

Implementation of the recommendations was facilitated by the restructuring, in 1997 and 1998, of the Secretariat machinery responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance which followed the same approach to reform recommended in the in-depth evaluation. The sustained efforts of the new Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, established in 1998, brought about significant progress on the issues addressed in these recommendations. Support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee — the main consultative body for humanitarian agencies — has been enhanced. The mechanisms to plan and monitor emergency assistance have been improved. Progress has been made in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies and in the advocacy of humanitarian concerns.

There remain, however, a number of significant problems. The rapid response to emergencies is still hindered by the absence of special United Nations administrative and financial rules and procedures suited to emergency situations. The work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee needs to be more decision-oriented. An effective procedure for sharing lessons learned is still required. Recommendations are made to address these issues.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3). The Committee endorsed recommendations 1 to 13 and 14 (b) to 22 as contained in the report.

2. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General, considering that "improvements are necessary in the coordination and rapid deployment of United Nations humanitarian responses", instituted "a major restructuring of Secretariat machinery responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance" (A/51/950, paras. 76-77). The restructuring included the establishment of an office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to replace the Department of Humanitarian Affairs; the transfer of the Department's operational responsibilities to other appropriate entities that provide assistance on the ground; focusing the action of the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the core functions identified in General Assembly resolution 46/182, namely development of humanitarian policy, advocacy of humanitarian concerns and coordination of humanitarian emergency response. One of the objectives of the restructuring was the strengthening of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which would continue to be the main consultative body for humanitarian agencies, chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. An IASC Steering Committee would be established to enhance a rapid response capacity. In January 1998, following the approval by the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/12 B, of the proposals of the Secretary-General, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was reorganized and renamed the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The head of the Office has dual responsibilities as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and as the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

3. The general intent of the restructuring and the different measures adopted followed the same approach to reform recommended in the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3). This approach, endorsed by CPC, was "(a) to strengthen the capacity of the Department to support effectively inter-agency cooperation and coordination through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Emergency Relief Coordinator; and (b) to ensure that the Department did not become involved in operational activities, which were more effectively carried out by the operational programmes and agencies that were represented in the Standing Committee" (A/52/16,[1] para. 301).

4. The present triennial review, conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to determine the extent to which the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination have been implemented, is based, as was the case with past triennial reviews, on a review of the relevant documentation, information submitted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and members of the IASC, and consultations by the Central Evaluation Unit for clarification and verification purposes.

II. Findings

A. Natural and other sudden-onset disasters

1. Emergency relief in the wake of natural and other sudden-onset disasters

Recommendation 1
Special United Nations emergency rules and procedures

(a) In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/182, special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the end of 1997. These special emergency rules and procedures would incorporate the adaptations already made with regard to financial procedures as they relate to the requirements of Department of Humanitarian Affairs emergency activities, address related issues concerning personnel and procurement arrangements, and make any other adjustments needed;

(b) Pending development of such rules, existing financial procedures would remain in place but a standing delegation of authority to cover other processes for which existing rules are most detrimental to the Department's effectiveness should be granted to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and

Emergency Relief Coordinator and his designated representatives; the authority delegated should be used in a manner that is consistent with United Nations policies in areas such as recruitment of personnel and geographical and gender balance, or procurement of goods for disaster relief and international bidding.

5. In several of its resolutions, 37/144 of 17 December 1982, 39/207 of 17 December 1984 and 45/221 of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to adapt existing United Nations procedures "in order to permit the Office [of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator] to respond in a timely manner to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to sudden disasters" (resolution 45/221, para. 3). In 1991, in paragraph 29 of the annex to resolution 46/182 — the resolution which led to the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, now the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — the General Assembly considered that "special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the United Nations to enable all organizations to disburse quickly emergency funds, and to procure emergency supplies and equipment, as well as to recruit emergency staff". The 1997 in-depth evaluation of Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted that the Secretariat had not developed the special emergency rules and procedures requested by the Assembly, and observed that, although some progress had been made through a joint effort of the Department, of Geneva administrative services and of the Department of Administration and Management in New York, and the adoption of special arrangements, nonetheless, "as a consequence of the absence of appropriate rules, existing rules are frequently applied in a manner that does not take into account the nature of the Department's activities" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 10).

6. Special emergency rules and procedures had not been developed by the end of 1997, as recommended in recommendation 1 (a). This lack of action was noted in the 1998 and 1999 Office of Internal Oversight Services annual reports (A/53/428, appendix I, and A/54/393, appendix I). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to encounter administrative difficulties and delays in providing speedy support to the field. In paragraph 13 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] the Economic and Social Council reiterated the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, and called "upon the Secretary-General to develop emergency rules and procedures to ensure a rapid response to humanitarian crises". During 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs made proposals for the establishment of a set of emergency rules and procedures. Consultations between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the Controller resulted in delegation of the financial authority to issue allotments, effective 1 January 1999, and to accept contributions, agreements and pledges for funding of emergencies, effective 7 January 1999. The delegation of authority to recruit emergency personnel under the 200 and 300 series of the Staff Rules particularly during the critical initial period of emergencies was not granted to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. This has resulted in considerable delays in the recruitment and deployment of emergency personnel in recent crisis situations, such as in Kosovo and East Timor, as well as in the extension of contracts of staff already deployed in the field. It is concluded from the above that, early in 2000, the special arrangements agreed upon earlier had been expanded but that special emergency rules and procedures had not been adopted as yet.

7. The standing delegation of authority recommended in recommendation 1 (b) as a transitory measure, pending the adoption of special emergency rules and procedures, was not granted. Delays still persist between the time a decision is taken that emergency funds will be made available and the actual receipt by field offices. In the most common situation, when the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs interacts with UNDP Resident Representatives coordinating the United Nations response at the field level, the Office needs to process a number of financial documents through Geneva Administrative Services and the UNDP Accounts and Treasury, in New York, as well as to provide evidence that rapid processing of the documents is required for effective response to an emergency situation. After processing of the required documents, the UNDP Treasury sends the funds to the UNDP field office concerned. UNDP field offices are not authorized to incur expenditures upon receipt of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs telex advising that the remittance of funds is in progress. The situation is sometimes more complex when there is no UNDP field presence in the country where the emergency occurred. In its comments on a

draft of the present report, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that the result of the current sluggish and non-user-friendly administrative structure is slow humanitarian response to both natural and complex disasters. In this connection, it is recalled that General Assembly resolution 46/182 was concerned with the capacity of all organizations of the United Nations system to respond to calls for emergency assistance.

2. Disaster reduction

Recommendation 2
Overall strategy for Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to disaster reduction

To support the practical application of disaster reduction policies, the Disaster Mitigation Branch should, primarily: (a) provide international and regional programmes and agencies involved in the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade with the required guidance in the development of disaster management plans and strategies; and (b) monitor actions of these programmes and agencies in relation to the targets of the Framework.

8. As a result of the reorganization of the Secretariat (see para. 2 above), the functions related to coordination of natural disaster relief remained with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, under the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, while the responsibilities of the Emergency Relief Coordinator for operational activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness which "relate to national capabilities and are more appropriately situated in UNDP" (A/51/950, para. 187) were transferred to UNDP early in 1998, in pursuance of paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. In addition to the functional responsibilities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs relevant to natural-disaster prevention and emergency response, as described in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals" (A/52/303, paras. 25.6 and 25.8), activities related to the implementation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction remained the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, effected through the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction which is "responsible for the day-to-day coordination of Decade activities" (resolution 44/236, annex, para. 14 (b)).

9. At the end of 1997, the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction presented an action plan for 1998-1999, the final phase of the Decade. The Action Plan offered guidance with regard to the development of national disaster management plans and strategies integrated into development plans. Although there was no systematic monitoring of the relevant actions of international and regional programmes and agencies, the Decade Inter-Agency Steering Committee served as a forum to discuss disaster reduction policies, strategic applications and programmes of action among the United Nations partners. In addition, the Action Plan recognized the responsibilities of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as Task Manager for natural disasters within the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis on the disaster reduction needs of small island developing States (resolution 51/183, para. 14). The Action Plan also provided for regional and issue-specific information exchange on achievements of the Decade, by means of respective preparatory conferences feeding into the Decade's concluding event, the Programme Forum held at Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999. Finally, the Action Plan also provided for an independent assessment of the achievements of the Decade by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Scientific and Technical Committee. The assessment, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session through the Economic and Social Council in 1999, included observations on future needs and areas of greatest priority "for which lead organizations in the United Nations system should be designated ... in recognition of the inherent cross-cutting nature of the subject of disaster prevention" (A/54/132/Add.1-E/1999/80/Add.1, paras. 62 and 66). In his annual report on the work of the Organization in 1999, the Secretary-General stated that "major improvements in risk-assessment and loss-estimation methodologies have been identified through the International Decade", and that the experience of the Decade "shows that a key to successful longer-term prevention strategies is broad-based cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation". On this subject, the report concluded that "it is

essential that the pioneering work carried out during the ... Decade ... be continued".[3]

Recommendation 3
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to in-country coordination of disaster reduction programmes

Within the Department, activities of the disaster management training programme and of the Disaster Reduction Division should be jointly planned. Concerning its partners, the Department should request the executive heads of the agencies involved in disaster reduction programmes to issue by the end of 1997 clear directives to their field offices instructing them to participate actively in the Resident Coordinator system and the disaster management team mechanism.

10. Support to in-country coordination of United Nations disaster reduction programmes has been divested from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to UNDP. The new arrangement makes possible a fuller integration of disaster reduction management into development programmes, which was the purpose of recommendation 3. UNDP has undertaken to plan jointly activities of the Disaster Management Training Programme with integrated capacity-building programmes in a range of countries. In 1999, the Administrative Committee on Coordination's Organizational Committee noted "the growing awareness among different organizations of the severe negative consequences of disasters for sustainable development and the initiatives taken by them, including, *inter alia*, those by the World Bank, to strengthen their capacity to participate in natural disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation activities" (ACC/1999/2, para. 59 (f)).

Recommendation 4
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The Department should work more closely with UNDP in seeking to raise the funds needed to support the activities of the Decade secretariat between 1997 and the closing of the Decade, in particular: (a) to establish an information network between partners of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, including early warning aspects of disaster reduction; and (b) to promote research on the economic aspects of disasters.

11. During 1997, the Decade secretariat focused on issues of early warning and electronically managed dissemination of disaster reduction information. The 1998 scientific conference held at Potsdam, Germany, discussed these issues and identified local experiences which can best improve the effectiveness of early warning systems. Research on the economic impact of natural disasters was one of the Decade activities during the last two years of the Decade. In particular, the Decade secretariat coordinated the Inter-Agency Task Force on the El Niño phenomenon and its consequences. There were no UNDP/Decade secretariat joint fund-raising initiatives to fund activities in this area. UNDP, however, provided financial support to the Potsdam conference as well as global and regional meetings that led to the closing of the Decade. UNDP also funded research on the social and economic impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

Recommendation 5
Follow-up to the Decade

After the closing of the Decade, in 1999, continuation of the Department's responsibilities for future disaster reduction programmes agreed upon by the General Assembly should be dependent upon a review of the comparative advantages of increased support from UNDP and upon identification of adequate funding mechanisms.

12. The Decade Programme Forum organized in 1999, as part of the closing event of the Decade, adopted the strategy document entitled "A safer world in the twenty-first century: risk and disaster reduction". Regarding the successor arrangements for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Secretary-General proposed that the agreed-upon arrangements — the establishment of an inter-agency task force and the continuation of the existing inter-agency secretariat for natural disaster reduction — implemented under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, "should be flexible in the initial period and adapted as experience is gained. The arrangements would, therefore, need to be reviewed after one year." The review would take into account, *inter alia*, the results of the "ongoing dialogue within the international disaster reduction community in the fields of climate change, scientific

research, environment, sustainable development and disaster reduction" (A/54/497, para. 14). This review should provide an opportunity to examine the comparative advantages of increased support from UNDP as recommended in recommendation 5. The General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal in resolution 54/219.

B. Humanitarian emergencies requiring a coordinated response

1. Coordination mechanisms

Recommendation 6
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/57, the Committee, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, should serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination. The Department should strengthen its capacity and improve its performance to ensure that consensus in the Committee is reached quickly on coordination arrangements, division of operational responsibilities and related matters, and thereupon effectively implemented. The Department should prioritize its work in order to facilitate inter-agency cooperation in cases of complex emergencies.

13. IASC, established in 1992 and chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, concerns itself with those emergencies that exceed the mandate or capacity of any one agency and require a coordinated response. The relevant United Nations operational agencies and other humanitarian organizations participate in the work of the Committee. The 1999 Office of Internal Oversight Services inspection review of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see para. 33 below) observed that, since the establishment of that Office, "various measures have contributed to strengthening the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee" (A/54/334, para. 17). In October 1998, the IASC issued its Recommendations related to the Review of the Capacity of the United Nations System for Humanitarian Assistance. The recommendations address a number of important issues such as coordination arrangements at the field level, internally displaced persons, local capacities and relief and development, and resource mobilization. The IASC Working Group "broadened the consultative process on policy issues by delegating to individual members lead responsibility in subsidiary working groups or reference groups for specific issues" (ibid., para. 19). For example, the reference group on gender and humanitarian action — established pursuant to the request of the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 8 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] that the Emergency Relief Coordinator "ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies" — benefited from the work done on this issue by members of the IASC and by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. The group completed its work in less than a year, and finalized an inter-agency background paper and policy statement on gender, both of which were adopted by the IASC. The commitments to action agreed to in the policy statement now need to be implemented by the various agencies, and their effective monitoring needs to be achieved.

14. Since 1997, prioritization of IASC and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs work was facilitated by the renewed focus of the Emergency Relief Coordinator role on three core functions (see para. 2 above). However, prioritization was made more complex by the multiplication of various working groups and task forces — a dozen of such groups have been created with uneven results. At the end of 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs proposed that several groups which had completed their tasks be discontinued, as responsibility for follow-up on their decisions can be assumed by the IASC Working Group. Several members of the IASC consider that, in the future, such groups should have clear terms of reference, with the desired outputs indicated, and sunset clauses. In addition, the Emergency Relief Coordinator participates in the work of the Executive Committees and the Development Group established in 1997 to strengthen policy and managerial coherence in the work of the Organization. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is the convener of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is also a member of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security. The merging, in 1998, of the secretariats for IASC and Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs alleviated some concerns regarding overlap in mandates and duplication. On this issue, the IASC Working Group concluded that the overlap between the

terms of reference of the two bodies could not be completely eliminated and that the challenge, therefore, is to enhance the synergy between the two. Non-United Nations members of IASC welcomed recent steps taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to distribute to them the agendas of upcoming Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs meetings and to invite their inputs.

15. At the end of 1999, members of the IASC Working Group discussed ways to strengthen the IASC process. Beyond the insufficient implementation of agreed policies and guidelines, members identified problems in the adoption of agendas of meetings, which are not as decision-oriented as they could be; other problems included the insufficient involvement of country teams, and the difficulty of including all actors in the IASC process while remaining relevant to the key operational agencies. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General proposed that "in order to enhance a rapid response capacity based on coherent policy, a Steering Committee of IASC will be established, which will comprise UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a representative of the non-governmental organization community" (A/51/950, para. 190). The Steering Committee was not established in 1998, owing to the strong opposition of the agencies not included in the proposed list of members. In its comments to Central Evaluation Unit, one of the main United Nations operational agencies expressed concern that it had not yet been possible to establish the Steering Committee. One non-United Nations member of IASC stated that the lack of progress on the question is creating serious problems for agencies engaged in emergency operations. It observed that the IASC is too large to make rapid decisions during a fast-breaking emergency; informal processes fill the vacuum but often leave out of the decisions non-United Nations operational agencies. The establishment of the Steering Committee was discussed again at the IASC meeting in December 1999. No consensus was reached on the matter. The April 2000 IASC meeting is likely to revisit this subject. In its comments on a draft of the present report, WHO stated that the distinction between "operational" and "non-operational" United Nations agencies, especially when maintained at the country level, might bias and undermine effective United Nations coordination by excluding agencies otherwise committed to it. It also stated that the continuing perception that capacity for rapid response exists only in some United Nations agencies and that "informed response" such as rapid health assessment and advocacy on major public health threats is not "operational" is fundamentally untrue.

Recommendation 7
Streamlining of field coordination

In specific emergencies, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should recommend to the Committee coordination arrangements most likely to be rapidly operational; in cases where coordination by the resident coordinator is not considered the most effective arrangement, the designation of a lead agency, when appropriate and taking into account the general policy of the Committee on this matter, should be the second option reviewed; recommendations for other arrangements should give due consideration to keeping the additional costs of coordination to a minimum and to avoiding the multiplication of layers of responsibilities and reporting. Under all coordination arrangements, the field coordinator should be held accountable by the Emergency Relief Coordinator for the impartiality with which coordination functions are carried out.

16. In 1998, the Economic and Social Council agreed with the range of options that could be used for field coordination as recommended by IASC, that is: the current Resident Coordinator will be confirmed as the Humanitarian Coordinator should it be determined by the IASC that he/she has the necessary profile; in cases where it is determined that the Resident Coordinator does not have the necessary profile to be Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC will appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator on a temporary basis until a person able to perform both functions is found to serve as Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. However, in complex emergencies where coordination of policies and activities at the regional level is required, or where a country-based Resident Coordinator, for functional reasons, cannot serve effectively as Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator may consider the designation of a lead agency to assume the responsibilities of humanitarian coordinator. This designation shall be made according to the particular circumstance of the emergency and drawing from an inter-agency analysis of those circumstances. In their

comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, IASC members stated that, in general, they believed the Humanitarian Coordinators system to be more effectively managed than was the case three years ago. However, there were still situations where coordinating arrangements in place did not provide the strong leadership needed to resolve competition and disagreements between agencies. Also, there were occasional delays in the designation of Humanitarian Coordinators which were attributed to the inadequate pool of qualified candidates. A few IASC members considered that the IASC should exert, to the extent possible, more pressure to expedite the selection or replacement of Humanitarian Coordinators. One member of the Committee was concerned by the apparent move away, in 1999, from proposing that the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator functions be performed by the same person. In a report to the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General noted that "further steps are foreseen by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including improved training of country teams and sufficient delegation of authority to the field to ensure greater cohesiveness and integration of initiatives" (A/53/139-E/1998/67, para. 25). The Emergency Relief Coordinator encouraged all operational agencies to nominate candidates with prior humanitarian experience to participate in the competency assessment exercise for Resident Coordinators, and thereby to enrich the roster of candidates. The pool of candidates for the functions of Resident Coordinators in countries with humanitarian programmes and countries in crisis, examined by the Central Evaluation Unit early in 2000, indicates that 4 out of 19 candidates were affiliated to, or sponsored by, humanitarian agencies.

Recommendation 8
A Department of Humanitarian Affairs cadre of field support staff

Within its present financial strategy, the Department should build up a small cadre of staff at Headquarters who, in addition to their regular duties, could be rapidly dispatched to the field to support field coordination by: monitoring of preparedness measures; monitoring of and guidance with regard to contingency planning; monitoring support of operations to ensure that adequate attention is paid to all sectors and needs and that there are no gaps in coverage; and carrying out other tasks, as necessary, linked to mandated functions such as appeal preparation, information gathering and dissemination, and facilitation of access.

17. Since 1997, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has routinely deployed its own staff, on very short notice, to support field coordination efforts, most recently in the Balkans and East Timor. In addition, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams — which include personnel from donor countries and humanitarian agencies, and were created for natural disaster response — were mobilized for "sudden-onset" complex emergencies as well. Such deployments are part of the Office's response to a new emergency, as well as, more recently, assistance to United Nations country teams to develop and implement contingency plans. The practice was strengthened during 1998 with the consolidation of all training and emergency roster functions in the Field Support Coordination Unit in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/Geneva. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams may be deployed at 12 hours' notice but cannot remain in the emergency area for more than two months, which is sometimes insufficient in complex emergencies. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, members of the IASC stated that the deployment in the field of the Office for the Coodination of Humanitarian Affairs staff has greatly assisted the coordination of humanitarian assistance in a number of situations but they are concerned with concurrent and prolonged absences from Headquarters of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator and a number of other staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They observed that the ongoing work of the IASC has suffered when there was no adequate backup within that Office. The Office is utilizing a methodology on inter-agency contingency planning — Key Elements of Inter-Agency Contingency Planning — and is working with relevant United Nations agencies to strengthen this methodology. The Office has allocated funds for six country teams a year to be trained and assisted in preparing contingency plans for complex emergencies. Regular monitoring of preparedness measures is done for those plans that have been prepared by the United Nations country teams. For its part, UNDP commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that it has made arrangements for rapidly deployable personnel but would welcome more direct assistance to its country

offices from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, particularly in the areas of preparedness and contingency planning. Several IASC members considered that field offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were often severely understaffed, or suffered from high turnover, and that, to strengthen coordination and ensure continuity, adequate staffing by personnel employed on a permanent basis is needed. In its comments to a draft of the present report, WFP stated that the cadre of field coordination support staff should not be exclusively Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs but should be drawn from the key operational agencies as well, through a mechanism of secondment that could be formalized.

2. Division of labour

Recommendation 9
Early agreement on allocation of responsibilities

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should delegate to the Emergency Relief Coordinator the authority to make final decisions on the allocation of responsibilities between agencies in emergency humanitarian assistance programmes requiring a coordinated response if no early agreement is reached through the normal process of consultations. The overriding consideration in such circumstances should be that the pace of preparations for and delivery of emergency assistance should not be delayed by the issue of allocating responsibilities for programmes, and for their coordination. Terms of reference for the scope of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's decision-making authority in situations where the Committee cannot reach consensus should be adopted by the Committee before the end of 1997.

18. The terms of reference for the scope of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's decision-making proposed in recommendation 9 above were not adopted by IASC. Instead, the Committee issued recommendations providing guidance on coordination arrangements as well as delineating responsibilities among the operational agencies (see para. 13 above). To facilitate early agreement on allocation of responsibilities, the Emergency Relief Coordinator engaged in continuous informal consultations with members of the IASC, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs fielded many joint needs-assessment missions. Progress is uneven, as noted in paragraphs 15 and 16 above. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, several members of the IASC stated that, in a number of situations, agreement on the allocation of responsibilities still took too long to reach, and that existing mechanisms to ensure early agreement need to be strengthened.

Recommendation 10
Operational predictability in the response to emergencies

By the end of 1997, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and standards to facilitate the conclusion of bilateral agreements between agencies on roles and responsibilities for permanent arrangements to enhance operational predictability taking into account resources available throughout the United Nations system in the response to emergencies. The guidelines and standards should take into account mandates and expertise existing both within and outside the United Nations system.

19. In 1998, in response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs explained that, by the time CPC recommendations became available, the process of concluding bilateral memoranda of understanding between agencies was at such an advanced stage that it was not considered necessary to develop the guidelines and standards envisaged in recommendation 10. For example, UNHCR concluded memoranda of understanding with its major operational partners (e.g., WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, IOM). In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, UNHCR stated, however, that within the humanitarian system, there is no operational predictability as yet in response to situations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) see para. 20 below).

Recommendation 11
Department of Humanitarian Affairs role in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies

(a) Where gaps are identified in the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies, the Department should

work with the most appropriate operational agencies to build up their in-house capacities to fill these gaps, taking into account the capacities of organizations outside the United Nations system;

(b) The Department's involvement in the coordination and implementation of issue-specific programmes should be on an exceptional and transitory basis, and at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

20. With the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in 1998, operational responsibilities that had been entrusted to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a consequence of gaps in the response to emergencies were redistributed to other parts of the United Nations system. For example, Department of Humanitarian Affairs functions related to demining activities were transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The IASC Working Group reached agreement that Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs coordination of issue-specific programmes should be carried out on an exceptional basis. Currently, the major outstanding gaps relate to the issues of IDPs and demobilization. In paragraph 11 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] the Economic and Social Council encouraged the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as focal point for the issue, "to work closely with all agencies and organizations involved, in particular with the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs". In 1998, the Representative of the Secretary-General presented to the Commission on Human Rights a normative framework for the internally displaced, the guiding principles on internal displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2). The Commission encouraged the members of IASC to share the Principles with their Executive Boards and staff, and to apply them in their activities. In 1999, guidelines on field practices and internal displacement were endorsed by IASC, and members were finalizing a training module on IDPs. The Senior Adviser to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on IDPs undertook three country reviews, and plans of action were developed in two countries to implement his recommendations. Regarding the issue of demobilization and the assignment of responsibilities to organizations of the United Nations system, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs agreed in September 1999 to establish a Task Force to examine this issue in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Task Force convened an expert working group, chaired by UNDP, which made recommendations on assignment of responsibilities in this context for review and endorsement by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs.

3. Resource mobilization

Recommendation 12
Appeals launched in advance of inter-agency consolidated appeals

For emergencies requiring a coordinated response, agencies should appeal for funds only in the context of the inter-agency consolidated appeal, based on an allocation of responsibilities and a strategic plan agreed upon by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. If separate agency appeals are needed in advance of the consolidated appeal to cover urgent needs of the affected population, such appeals should be launched only with the agreement of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and with clear indication of their purpose and status. The required consultations should not impede agencies in meeting their mandated responsibilities.

21. Since 1997, separate agency appeals have been very rare. Where agencies needed to launch an appeal before the consolidated inter-agency appeal, they have sought the agreement of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. However, in 1998, the effectiveness of the consolidated appeals process itself was the subject of concern, as donor response was decreasing. In 1994, 80 per cent of funds required in the appeals were provided, in 1996, 62 per cent, and in 1998, only 54 per cent. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs consulted with a wide range of humanitarian partners and established a sub-working group of the IASC to consider measures that would correct the shortcomings of the process. The group focused on improving the strategic planning within the consolidated appeals process, standardizing the procedures for the preparation of appeal documents and promoting monitoring mechanisms. All the consolidated inter-agency appeals are now launched on the same day, a few weeks before the new funding period. For example, the appeals for 2000 were launched in November 1999 by the Secretary-General himself. In the case of new emergencies, funds are

raised through flash appeals, which present to donors the best estimate of urgent needs. In the initial phase of emergencies, funds can also be drawn from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, established in 1992 as a cash-flow mechanism. The 1997 in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted that, among several factors, "constraints in the utilization of the Fund also reduced its usefulness and relevance" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 40). In its comments to a draft of the present report, UNICEF stated that part of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be available, on a non-reimbursable basis, in support to the United Nations coordinated response to humanitarian emergencies, particularly at the onset of such emergencies. In this connection, the existing capacity at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to deploy field coordination staff on short notice was reviewed in paragraph 17 above.

22. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, IASC members recognized the progress achieved in the appeal process, and noted improvements in donor response. Funding disparities between countries, programme sectors and agencies still exist. For example, in 1998, 78 per cent of funds required for humanitarian assistance in Angola were provided; only 48 per cent were provided for assistance to Liberia. Also in 1998, WFP raised 80 per cent of the funds for which it had appealed, and UNHCR raised 76 per cent, but UNDP raised only 30 per cent, WHO 11 per cent, and FAO 10 per cent. This sectoral imbalance is sometimes explained by inadequate linkages between emergency and development assistance. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, several agencies stated that there is a need for a new approach in field offices and agency headquarters to planning, the response of the United Nations to emergencies and rehabilitation strategies. Linkage between emergency and rehabilitation is reviewed in paragraph 29 below. With regard to the response to emergencies, prior to the onset of a full-fledged crisis, contingency planning by United Nations Resident Coordinators and agencies field offices, with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, contributes to developing inter-agency planning scenarios. Once an emergency has started, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs considers that forward planning is a crucial part of the ongoing work of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and his/her coordination support staff. "It is essential that they do not get so preoccupied by the immediate relief needs that they fail to ... project alternative scenarios for different directions the emergency may take, and make preparations for the changing needs and operating conditions that may arise" (OCHA Orientation Handbook on Complex Emergencies, 1999, p. 12).

Recommendation 13
Global monitoring of emergency assistance

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should develop its capacity to monitor actively and report on contributions to emergency humanitarian assistance and remaining needs. This monitoring should cover all sources of assistance. To facilitate such monitoring, the Department should pursue the adoption of guidelines and standards, within the framework of the non-governmental organizations Code of Conduct, for agencies outside the United Nations system providing emergency assistance.

23. In response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up in 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that an Appeals Monitoring and Reporting Unit had been created within the Office to enhance its capacity to monitor emergency assistance, and that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs participated in inter-agency consultations on enhancing system-wide monitoring and accountability. Regarding financial tracking of contributions and reporting, members of IASC stated to the Central Evaluation Unit that the source of difficulties was not the system set up by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs but the inadequate reporting from the donors and the recipient agencies resulting in the imprecise data available to the Office. The 1997 in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in relation to this issue of monitoring of assistance, noted that "a minimum of coordination with other initiatives was required" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 45). The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief does not require reporting to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Sphere Project — launched in 1997 by non-governmental organization networks, with the participation of Governments of donor countries and United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — sought to develop a set of standards in core areas of

humanitarian assistance to improve the quality of assistance provided and the accountability of humanitarian agencies. The improved consolidated appeals process Technical Guidelines released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in March 1999 focus on strategic planning and monitoring. The Guidelines prescribed, *inter alia*, that planning documents mention assistance programmes taking place outside the context of the consolidated appeals process. Pilot projects to operationalize the guidelines were implemented at the end of 1999.

4. Advocacy of humanitarian principles and concerns

Recommendation 14
Advocacy of humanitarian issues and concerns with the policy-making organs of the United Nations

[(a) Not endorsed by CPC;]

(b) The Emergency Relief Coordinator should brief members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee without delay on results of consultations within the Framework for Coordination of the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, and on his meetings with the Secretary-General and with the Security Council and other policy-making organs, as appropriate.

24. The Emergency Relief Coordinator kept members of the IASC promptly informed of results of consultations with other departments on policy issues, as well as his meetings with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and other policy-making organs. The establishment of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has facilitated the exchange of information on such issues. It is noted that the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs took a more active role in the advocacy of humanitarian issues, particularly with respect to the Security Council. The Council is now routinely briefed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and IASC members on humanitarian aspects of crises. Regarding the humanitarian impact of sanctions, the General Assembly requested that the sanctions committees "give priority to the humanitarian problems that could arise from the application of sanctions", and that potential problems be brought immediately to the attention of the Security Council (resolution 51/242, annex II, para. 31). The Assembly decided that the Office should play a coordinating role in organizing and conducting assessments of the humanitarian needs and the vulnerabilities of target countries. Among several initiatives, with the support of IASC members, the Office is involved in developing methodologies to address the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

Recommendation 15
Coordination with activities other than humanitarian assistance

Guidelines should be adopted and disseminated to all field missions and headquarters units on coordination between humanitarian organizations, on the one hand, and special representatives or envoys of the Secretary-General, political missions, peacekeeping missions and similar field activities, on the other hand; the guidelines should be applied taking into account the specificity of each situation.

25. In paragraph 12 of its Recommendations of 15 October 1998, IASC recommended that depending on the functions and responsibilities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in a given country or region, his/her relationship with the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be clarified at the earliest possible instance. In paragraph 13 of the Recommendations, the IASC considered, in particular, that the institutional links between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be designed to maintain the required close dialogue while protecting the particular identity and objectives of the humanitarian programme, and that the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should continue to be directly accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator regarding emergency humanitarian assistance. In paragraph 12 of agreed conclusions 1998/1, the Economic and Social Council fully supports "efforts to clarify the parameters of authority for the resident/humanitarian coordinator functions". In 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations humanitarian agencies, finalized the Note of Guidance: Relations

between Humanitarian Coordinators and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. After adoption by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs submitted the Note, in June 1999, to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for review and approval. On the basis of the information available as of late February 2000, the Central Evaluation Unit could not determine when the Note would be approved. At the retreat of Humanitarian Coordinators in November 1999, participants stated that coordination with United Nations political and peacekeeping actors did not work properly and that there was a general lack of understanding of humanitarian principles among the political and military personnel at the field level. They urged clarification of the interaction between humanitarian, political and peacekeeping components of the United Nations in complex emergencies. In 2000, this issue as well as the concern for the security of humanitarian workers will be one of the priorities of the IASC Working Group.

5. Collection, analysis and dissemination of information

Recommendation 16
Enhancing the capacity to provide early warning analyses to the Secretary-General and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

(a) On the basis of a report by the Administrative Committee on Coordination Working Group on Early Warning of New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons submitted before the end of 1997, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should agree on a minimum common methodology for gathering, analysing and sharing information pertinent to early signals of humanitarian crises;

(b) Without duplicating specialized early warning systems operated by agencies, inter-agency consultations should, on the basis of consolidated analyses prepared by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, review on a monthly basis short-to-long-term perspectives of situations of concern. Actionable recommendations from the Working Group addressed to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should include, where relevant, prevention or preparedness initiatives.

26. No common methodology for early warning analyses was agreed upon by IASC members. Early warning signals were discussed at the weekly inter-agency consultations held in New York and Geneva. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been focusing the bulk of its early warning attention on strengthening and supporting the United Nations inter-agency/departmental Framework for Coordination early warning mechanism. This has included doubling its membership in 1999 to add five United Nations humanitarian agencies: FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. As the secretariat to the Framework Team, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has promoted the development of the methodology for country review analyses, and the Team is giving increasing attention to the identification and implementation of preparedness and preventive recommendations. The Framework Team now conducts frequent country reviews of situations of concern, with broad participation by United Nations departments and agencies. Within the Office, the Information Analysis Unit intends, for the period 2000-2001, to strengthen information exchange regarding early warning information and to assist regional organizations in building early warning capacities within their respective regions.

Recommendation 17
Department of Humanitarian Affairs coordinated programme for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information

By the end of 1997, the Department should formulate a comprehensive strategy maximizing the complementarity of the Humanitarian Early Warning System, the Integrated Regional Information Network for the Great Lakes and ReliefWeb, and present a common funding strategy.

27. In 1998, with the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Humanitarian Early Warning System, ReliefWeb and the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) were consolidated under a unified Headquarters management structure. Since then, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has discontinued the Humanitarian Early Warning System, and instead focused most of its limited early warning staff

resources on strengthening the Framework for Coordination early warning mechanism (see para. 26 above). This decision reflects both the importance of the inter-agency/departmental approach of the Framework Team, as well as changes in the context of the Humanitarian Early Warning System. These changes include the considerable expansion of early warning information publicly available on the Internet, and the increased number of entities outside the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs monitoring early warning indicators — such entities can provide their information to the Office, rather than requiring Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs resources to generate this information. For the period 2000-2001, one of the planned activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs subprogramme Humanitarian Emergency Information is to rationalize ReliefWeb, the web site OCHA on-line and IRIN to ensure a functional and non-duplicative relationship between them. Several IASC members noted that the development of ReliefWeb and IRIN had been very useful for their work. WHO stated that ReliefWeb is considered the leading source of disaster information on the web.

6. Relief and rehabilitation

Recommendation 18
Enhanced coordination with development programmes and agencies

(a) By the end of 1997, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee a set of descriptive criteria to determine the conditions under which the need for a coordinated response to an emergency no longer exists, and where the coordination responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator can accordingly cease;

(b) Department of Humanitarian Affairs-led consolidated appeals process resource mobilization exercises for countries in humanitarian crises should integrate in one strategy relief and rehabilitation programmes, with adequate involvement of a coordinating development programme or agency.

28. The "set of descriptive criteria to determine the conditions under which the need for a coordinated response to an emergency no longer exists" was not proposed to the IASC, as envisaged in recommendation 18 (a). In paragraph 26 of its Recommendations of 15 October 1998, the IASC agreed that United Nations system relief and development practitioners should, as a matter of principle and routine ... clearly define their exit and/or handover strategy to local interlocutors. In post-emergency situations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs seeks to hand over most of its activities to agencies mandated to coordinate rehabilitation programmes. In practice the transition from relief to rehabilitation is rarely clear-cut and, since 1997, there were situations where lasting recovery did not materialize, and relief coordination mechanisms, once phased out, were reactivated.

29. IASC approved the integration through the consolidated appeals process of relief and rehabilitation programmes in one strategy. Among other initiatives taken since 1997, the organizations of the United Nations system participated in the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), a tool for coordinating development programmes in close collaboration with Governments. In its 1999 review of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see para. 33 below), the Office of Internal Oversight Services considered that "the linkage between the programming aspects of the consolidated appeal process and [UNDAF] provides the basis for strategically coordinated programming for recovery" (A/54/334, para. 30). In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, early in 2000, one member of the IASC stated that, although some recovery and rehabilitation programmes have been included in the consolidated appeals process, and considerable discussion has taken place in the IASC, the Economic and Social Council and elsewhere on linking relief to development, funding for effective transitions remains unpredictable and hard to obtain. In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, the World Bank — which joined the IASC in 1999 — acknowledged the need to make a more concerted effort to ensure as smooth a transition as possible from emergency relief to reconstruction and development. To this end, various mechanisms have been established to identify and operationalize ways to reduce the "gap" that exists between relief and development in a post-conflict context. UNDP, the World Bank and UNHCR form the secretariat of the Brookings Process, which began in November 1998 as an initiative to address conceptually issues related to "bridging this gap". Additionally, the

IASC Reference Group on Post-Conflict Reintegration, chaired by UNDP and with participation from IASC members, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, and relevant non-governmental organizations, is working to identify innovative ways of concretely reducing the gap in post-conflict situations.

7. Lessons learned and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Recommendation 19
Dissemination of lessons learned and best practices

Drawing on the units contributing to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs lessons learned studies, to the revision or development of policies and guidelines, and to the dissemination of related documentation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee by the end of 1997 a procedure to ensure effective follow-up on lessons learned and best practices. The agreed-on procedure should be implemented in collaboration with the relevant units of members of the Committee.

30. The procedure recommended in recommendation 19 was not proposed to the IASC. The IASC subsidiary groups provided a setting to analyse and review the coordination practices in various emergencies. In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, WHO stated that its Regional Office for the Americas mentioned excellent experiences, in particular, the joint evaluation meeting of the United Nations system organized after Hurricane Mitch. Nevertheless, in their comments, members of the IASC noted that lessons learned activity has been reduced in 1999, and considered that an effective procedure for sharing lessons learned was still needed.

8. Using methods and practices of disaster relief

Recommendation 20
Review of the usefulness of disaster relief practices in the complex emergencies environment

By the end of 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should complete a review of the possibilities of further integration of its programmes for natural disasters and complex emergencies. Any integration proposed should preserve the effectiveness of the methods and practices in different types of situations.

31. In response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up, in 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that it used methods and practices designed for natural disaster relief in the complex emergencies environment. In 1999, an IASC reference group on natural disasters was established to work "on a set of recommendations on the strengthening of the mechanisms of response to natural disasters of IASC members, at both headquarters and field levels" (A/54/154-E/1999/94, para. 34). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that the review by the group "would also examine the synergy between [the United Nations response to] natural disasters and complex emergencies" (A/54/6 (sect. 25) table 25.20, p. 41). The group finalized its report early in 2000. It is not clear to the Central Evaluation Unit, however, how recommendations presented in the report might be useful in the context of complex emergencies, as the group limited its work to the response to natural disasters.

C. Other issues

Recommendation 21
Department of Humanitarian Affairs strategy for raising awareness

(a) The Department should propose a strategy for raising awareness of humanitarian principles and policies to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The agreed-on strategy should become a component of the Committee's yearly work plan and should be implemented in collaboration with all Committee members;

(b) Briefings and information provided by the Department to Member States should not be limited to updates on assistance provided in response to specific emergencies but should include information on a wider range of topics, such as the activities of the Department and regular reviews of decisions by intergovernmental bodies and their implications for humanitarian activities.

32. Members of the IASC, in their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, commended the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to raise awareness of humanitarian principles and policies at the global level. In addition to briefings to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs representatives briefed agency governing bodies, at their invitation, on a range of topics envisaged in recommendation 21 (b). In the meantime, IASC is still discussing modalities for the dissemination of IASC decisions and policy papers that have been jointly agreed upon. In 1998, the Office and IASC developed a set of principles/ground rules for humanitarian action in the field to ensure that the principles on which United Nations humanitarian assistance is based are understood and accepted. A first draft of the document entitled "Protecting principles under stress" was finalized at the end of 1998 but, since then, IASC has not taken action on it.

Recommendation 22
Follow-up to the management study

Improvements in the management of the Department made as a follow-up to the 1996 management study should be assessed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services by the end of 1998. This assessment should include a review of the issue of core functions and their funding.

33. The recommendations of the 1996 management study were taken into account in the establishment of Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as the issue of the core functions of the former Department of Humanitarian Affairs and their funding. In 1999, the Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed the management strategies of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and assessed how well it focused on its core functions. The inspection by the Office of Internal Oversight Services concluded that the "streamlining and reorganization within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have enhanced the capabilities of that Office to respond to emerging humanitarian crises" (A/54/334, para. 40).

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

34. Implementation of the recommendations made by CPC at its thirty-seventh session was facilitated by the restructuring of the Secretariat and the measures taken, during the period 1997-1999, to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. As a result, support to the IASC has been enhanced, and progress has been made in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies — in the development of humanitarian policy as well as in operations. The mechanisms to plan and monitor emergency assistance have been improved. Advocacy of humanitarian concerns by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office is appreciated by humanitarian agencies. The transfer of operational activities conducted by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs before the reorganization of the Secretariat is almost completed.

35. Efforts are still needed to make the work of the IASC more decision-oriented, to ensure stronger field coordination, to maintain close dialogue with activities other than humanitarian assistance, and to promote rehabilitation programmes. In this regard, recent steps taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the members of the IASC — such as improvements in the preparation of IASC meetings, revision of selection procedures for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, issuance of revised technical guidelines of the consolidated appeals process — and action to implement them, may help to address a number of difficulties. Assistance to field coordination by the Office, particularly in the areas of preparedness and contingency planning, needs to be provided in a manner that does not risk curtailing core activities at Headquarters.

36. There remain, in addition, three significant problems. The rapid response to emergencies is still hindered by the absence of special United Nations administrative and financial rules and procedures, suited to emergency situations. In a related matter, the Steering Committee of the IASC, proposed by the

Secretary-General in 1997 to enhance a rapid-response capacity to humanitarian emergencies, has not yet been established. Lastly, an effective procedure for sharing lessons learned is still needed. These issues were addressed in recommendations 1 and 19 of the in-depth evaluation which were endorsed by CPC at its thirty-seventh session. The issue of the IASC Steering Committee is related to recommendation 6, on support to the IASC, which stressed that the IASC should quickly reach consensus on coordination arrangements, division of operational responsibilities and related matters.

B. Recommendations

37. The Office of Internal Oversight Services makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1
Special United Nations emergency rules and procedures

In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1998/1, special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the end of 2000. These special emergency rules and procedures would incorporate the adaptations already made with regard to financial procedures as they relate to the requirements of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs emergency activities, address related issues concerning personnel and procurement arrangements, and make any other adjustments needed. (See paras. 5-7 above.)

Recommendation 2
Steering Committee of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Steering Committee of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee proposed by the Secretary-General in 1997 in his programme for reform, or a similar mechanism, should be established by the end of 2000 to ensure that: (a) decisions of members of the Standing Committee in response to crisis situations requiring immediate action are taken rapidly and based on coherent policy; (b) consultations are conducted, as appropriate, with the full membership of the Standing Committee. (See paras. 15 and 18 above.)

Recommendation 3
Dissemination of lessons learned and best practices

Drawing on the units within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee contributing to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs lessons learned studies, to the revision or development of policies and guidelines, and to the dissemination of related documentation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Standing Committee by the end of 2000 a procedure to ensure effective follow-up on lessons learned and best practices. The agreed-on procedure should be implemented in collaboration with the relevant units of members of the Committee. Under this procedure, arrangements should be adopted so that the effective implementation of recently agreed-upon policies, such as on gender, is monitored. (See paras. 13 and 20 above.)

(Signed) Hans **Corell**
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Notes

[1] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/52/16).

[2] Ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/53/3 and Corr.1), chap. VII.

[3] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/54/1), paras. 28, 30 and 35.